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HOLLYHOCKS.

"A flaunting, graceless flower!" you say?
Ah well! it may be so,
And still—

It seems but yesterday,
That morning long ago!
I almost see the cottage yet,
The winding path—and Margaret.

Dew-pearls strung close on cobweb threads,
Gleamed in the door-yard grass,
And from the prim-lined garden-beds
Smiled up to see us pass.
Sweet, old-time blossoms, greeting thus
A fairer flower, unenvious.

We rested in the arbor-shade,
While through the open door
Stole bashful sunbeams, half-afraid,
And played upon the floor;
Or, bolder grown, with brightness fleet,
Touched her soft hair and forehead sweet.

A light-winged breeze sailed gently by;
The lark's clear note afar
Through the blue spaces of the sky
Slid like a falling star;—
I never saw her look so fair!
Ah! if I told her, would she care?

Within a scarlet hollyhock
A pollen-laden bee
Deep plunging, made the blossom rock,—
She flashed a smile at me;
And with a motion swift and light,
She caught the silken petals tight.

Loud hummed the bee with angry wing,—
"Why thus so ill content?
The sweets you sought, poor foolish thing,"
She said, "are all unspent!"
My heart leaped up to hear her speak,
A sudden courage dyed my cheek.

"Darling!" I cried, "O let him fly!
And take me in his place!
Fast prisoned in your heart, could I
Ask any sweeter grace?
I could not struggle to be free,
So dear a jailer holds the key!"

Her cheek flushed like an opening rose,
No word her lips did say—
I saw her little hand unclose,
The glad bee flew away.
Ah me! 'twas forty years ago—
My hair is gray—yet this I know:

I've roamed through many garden bowers,
And blooming fields since then—
In summer wild-wood gathered flowers,
And in the mountain glen
Pulled harebells from the moss-grown rock—
Yet most I love the hollyhock!

—Mary A. P. Stansbury.

SNOWING ON PILATUS.

"NATALIE, Natalie!" The shrill, complaining voice roused me from my reading. I glanced down the garden-path to where the girl, Natalie, stood leaning upon the stone terrace, with her chin upon her hands. She was looking away to where Mount Pilatus lifted its snow-covered peaks against the clouds. A mist covered the highest points of the mountain, by which we, down in the valley among the vines, knew that it was snowing up there.

"Natalie, Natalie!" came again the sharp voice from the cottage window. The girl down the path raised her head and turned slowly toward the house.

Natalie was only a peasant girl, dressed in the quaint costume of the canton—but her crimson skirt was fine and soft, and the black velvet of her bodice heavy with dainty silver embroideries. Rich, heavy silver chains hung from her shoulders and fastened at the points of her bodice. The linen that folded over her bosom was delicately fine. Her magnificent dark hair formed a coronal, fastened by bands of silver. Broad buckles of silver decorated her small though rudely made shoes. Picturesque, indeed, she looked, as she paused for a moment at the porch, and shading her eyes with her hand, looked once again toward Pilatus. Above the average height, exquisitely proportioned—a Madonna-like face lighted up by a pair of large, dusky eyes, that could grow misty with tears, or sparkle merrily on occasion. Now I saw a new expression in them—I could scarcely define the look—fear, sorrow, pain, seemed to be mingled there.

"Natalie!" called the voice of the invalid within, again, this time more pleading than severe.

"I am coming, matrina," answered the girl, entering the door-way.

"Oh, Natalie," cried the old woman in a moaning voice that reached me through the open door, "it is snowing on Pilatus, I know, or you would have answered me long ago. Will you never forget?"

"Yes, matrina, it is snowing up there; forgive me for neglecting you, but I cannot help watching it. Would heaven I could forget!" The girl's voice was full of sad pathos, and letting my book slip from my listless hands, I fell to wondering what romance, or, probably, superstition, was connected with the snow-storms of the mountain. I had been lounging here for four weeks now, opposite Lucerne—climbing the hills or making little voyages about on the four lakes. Many a quaint legend had been told me in these few weeks by the peasants—told in their odd *patois*, that I was puzzled to understand. Only yesterday, an old man, while rowing me across the lake, told me how, up among the peaks of Pilatus is a dark, stagnant sheet of water, and there, from Judea, came the conscience-stricken Pontius Pilate to commit suicide, which he did very properly—but he can never rest, and just before the terrible storms which sweep down from the mountain, his spirit is seen by the hunters who may chance to be in the vicinity of this unholy pool, to rise from the water and wash its hands, evidently in great distress of mind. The only drawback to the story was the old man's adding solemnly, that none who saw this apparition escaped death in the storm that was sure to follow. Not much encouragement to go up for the purpose of seeing Pilate.

"Will the Herr Freunder join us in partaking vespers-bread?" said the pleasant voice of Natalie at my side.

I started from my reverie, and followed her into the long, low living-room where the evening meal was spread.

The invalid greeted me with her gentle, dignified, "Greetings, sir guest!" a title she always bestowed upon me, ignoring all other. I often wondered how my old hostess managed to give her voice so sharp a tone, as she occasionally did, after hearing her greet me.

Soon after the close of the meal the old lady rose to retire, bidding me good-night. I wandered out into the garden again, to enjoy the moonlight and a cigar. Softly across the water from Lucerne floated the sound of bells. The voices of happy singers on the lake reached my ear. Pilatus rose cold, white, ghostly in the moonlight. Entranced by the almost unearthly beauty of the scene before me, I stretched myself upon a garden-seat near the terrace to enjoy it.

Suddenly I was startled by hearing a long, sobbing sigh near me. Looking up, I saw Natalie leaning her arms upon the terrace as I had seen her in the afternoon. She was again watching the snow-storm on Pilatus. Rising, I went to her side.

"Good evening, Natalie! Why so sad, Freundchen?"

She raised her large eyes; they were full of sorrow and pain.

"It snows to-night on Pilatus," she answered, tremulously.

"But why should it grieve you? Will you not tell me?"

To my surprise she dropped her head upon the stone-work and gave way to a stormy, passionate burst of tears. I did not speak or strive to comfort her for a few moments. She was sobbing out some grief long pent up. Presently I took her hand and led her to the seat I had just left, and as she grew calmer, I said:

"Come, Natalie, little friend, confide in me; tell me what grief is so troubling your young heart."

"Oh, sir, it is so hard to bear; they say I will forget it by and by; but I never shall, I never shall." Her voice rose excitedly over the last sentence.

"Tell me what it is that you cannot forget, dear Natalie."

"Yes, I will tell you. You have been down the lake and over the St. Gotthard Pass—you know just how fair it is on the other side the mountains. I was born over there. I am an Italian, then, by birth—but oh, I love the Schweiz, the beautiful home of my adoption. Only the mountain over there—Pilatus—I hate, hate and curse the dreadful mountain!" She shuddered and sighed heavily.

"Madre died when I was born, and the dear Swiss matrina who took me to her heart and made me her godchild the day my mother died, brought me here to her home to be her daughter. She had a son then—oh, he was so fair and gentle and brave in the childhood days when we studied and played to-

gether; and oh, he was fairer and nobler and braver as a man, when the years had passed, and I stood beside him a tall maiden—a woman by reason of my love for him, my brave, my lost Franz. He took me to his heart one day and told me I was to be his bride. His mother smiled and blessed us. And I—I was in a heaven of peace and gladness. The days went by, and we were counting by hours—the time was so near for our marriage. He laughingly left us one morning, saying he would take his last hunt; because after he had a wife he could be allowed no more such freedom. He went away to Pilatus to hunt. He never—came—back."

The girl rose, fiercely clasping her hands together.

"The terrible storm-spirit took him in its embrace; he is lying up there in the snow, and every storm is burying him deeper from me. A year to-night he has been sleeping there—and I have been watching down here. Mein Gott, mein Gott! mein Franz, mein Franz!"

And again she leaned her head upon the stone-work in a passion of tears. I took her hand, soothingly, in mine—but what could I say to the young stricken heart? I only held her cold hand, silently waiting for her to grow quiet. Presently she raised her head.

"Forgive me for intruding my grief upon you, but it has been a relief. I have never shed tears since he left us, until to-night; the horrible pain seems to be softened in my heart through these tears. I thank you for your patience. I must go into the house—good-night."

"Good-night, Natalie. *Gott sei mit dir!*"

She bowed her beautiful head an instant at my words, and then glided away. I sat down to think over the story I had just heard. Cruel Pilatus! It did not look so fair as it had an hour ago. So musing, I must have fallen asleep. When I roused, the moon was still shining, though with a fainter light. I was about to rise and return to the house, when, chancing to glance toward the terrace, I saw some one leaning against it. Was it Natalie again? I looked closely. It was a man. I rose and approached him. He started at my footstep on the paved walk, and turned full toward me. A tall, noble-looking fellow—though I could see even in the dim light that his face was pale and thin. Something inspired me with a strange idea; before I knew what I would say, I exclaimed,

"It is Franz—*nicht wahr?*"

The man came to my side, hastily.

"Yes, I am Franz; but who are you? I do not recognize you. And—and—Natalie. Is she well—does she live?"

"Yes, she lives, but believes you dead. How did you get here?"

"She loves me still—waits for me?"

"Yes, yes."

"My mother?"

"Lives, and only needs to know you live, to be restored to health."

"*Nun Gott sei Dank!*" And the strong head sank down just where Natalie's had been an hour before—and he cried and sobbed for joy. After a little we sat down together upon the garden-seat, and Franz told me how he had been caught in the storm, and nearly died; was rescued by the hunters—had brain-fever in the peasant's hut they had taken him to; had lain several months weak in mind and body; at last rallied, and, by slow degrees, recovered; but the year had passed, nearly, before he was fit to start for home. He had reached it, fearing, hoping, and when he reached the garden, had been utterly broken in heart lest he was to find them all dead—or shock them to death by appearing to them, his dear ones. This was his story. Then I told him all about Natalie and his mother; and, having made him promise to be patient and wait my return, I went to the house to call Natalie. The red morning light was just breaking over the hills. Natalie opened her door as I approached it. She looked a little pale.

"Dear child," began I, gently; "some one who saw your dear Franz is here, and would like to speak with you of him."

"Yes, dear friend, I dreamed of Franz; let us go and I will see this visitor."

I took her hand and led her to the garden. Franz stood turned from us. I led her to his side. She looked up. He opened his arms.

"Franz!"

"Natalie!"

She lay clasped to his heart. They spoke no word. I saw their trembling, clasping arms, and bowed heads. I turned away. I could not look upon their